NEWS RELEASE

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Tri-Cities marinas get grants to upgrade boat sewage equipment

Four marinas and yacht clubs in the Tri-Cities have been awarded more than $177,000 in federal and state grants to replace ageing boat sewage pumpout facilities, making it easier for area boaters to safely dispose of untreated sewage.

The grants, funded by the federal Clean Vessel Act (CVA) and administered by Washington State Parks Boating Program, cover the full cost of the new pumpout equipment and will also reimburse marinas for 75 percent of operation and maintenance expenses. Local marinas receiving the grants include Clover Island Marina and Clover Island Yacht Club in Kennewick, and Columbia Point Park and the Columbia Park Marina in Richland.

“The old pumpout unit was dilapidated, leaky and smelly,” said Roy Keck, Dock Captain for the Richland Yacht Club, whose members use the City of Richland’s pumpout at Columbia Point Park. In addition to reducing odor issues, “the new station is going to be more user-friendly and will accommodate more customers” because it’s in a more accessible location, Keck added.

With 271,000 registered boats in Washington, and thousands more unregistered small craft, discharge of untreated human waste from boats can have serious health and environmental impacts. Untreated sewage in recreational waters can make swimmers ill and lead to beach closures. Also, as organic matter from boat sewage breaks down, it can rob water of oxygen, harming fish and other aquatic wildlife.

Easy access to reliable boat sewage pumpout stations helps Washington boaters protect the state’s waters—and comply with U.S. law, which prohibits the discharge of raw sewage in inland waters or within three miles of the coastline. By using CVA pumpout
facilities, boaters prevented more than 4 million gallons of sewage from contaminating Washington’s waters in 2011 alone.

Many marina owners, especially in eastern Washington, have not taken advantage of CVA grants, which have been available since 1992. Washington Sea Grant, in collaboration with Washington State Parks Boating Program, has been conducting outreach to marina owners to encourage them to apply for the grants.

“Not only do the grants cover 75 percent of equipment and installation,” said Alan Wolslegel, Clean Vessel Program Manager for Washington State Parks, “they reimburse 75 percent of parts, labor and other expenses to operate and maintain the pumpouts over the life of the equipment.” Funding for the CVA grants comes from a tax on recreational fishing gear and boat fuel.

When additional state matching funds are available, Washington State Parks is able to cover the remaining 25 percent of equipment costs, as it did for the Tri-Cities marinas. Grants are made year-round and are available for both new pumpout facilities and renovations to existing ones.

Including the Tri-Cities facilities, more than 20 marinas across the state are expected to receive nearly $800,000 in Clean Vessel Act grants in 2012. There are currently about 150 pumpout stations in Washington. A searchable list of pumpout locations in Washington can be found at www.parks.wa.gov/boating/pumpout/.

Based at the University of Washington, Washington Sea Grant provides statewide marine research, outreach, and education services. The National Sea Grant College Program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. http://www.wsg.washington.edu/